

**ROCK STAR RESIDENT**  
10 THINGS YOU  
DIDN'T KNOW  
ABOUT  
CROTON-ON-  
HUDSON'S  
JENNIFER JILES



Matthew Brown/The Journal News

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No matter what else she accomplishes in her showbiz and voice-over career — an Emmy award for a children's TV show on the New York Mets, a Kmart ad with Martha Stewart (as a talking goose), comedy club gigs, good notices in the New York Times as Agnes Gooch in "Mame," a spot on the "Late Show with David Letterman" — Jennifer Jiles will forever be known as a Radio City Music Hall Rockette.

"I remember when I won my Emmy and I was doing interviews and I would try to stretch it out, stretch it out before they asked me about being a Rockette," says Jiles, who has lived in Croton-on-Hudson for the last three years. "It's what everybody wants to know — what was it like being a Rockette?"

"Then I sort of embraced it and wrote a show," she adds. "Let me just say it to everybody all at once."

That show became "Kicking and Screaming," with Jiles portraying 25 oddball characters from her Rockette days in the mid-1990s. It had a successful Off Broadway run and she still performs it regularly, including last year on the Paramount stage in Peekskill.

Her other stage roles have included a spin as one of the Pigeon sisters in a national tour of "The Odd Couple" that starred Tim Conway and Tom Poston, and a more serious run as Portia in a New York City production of "The Merchant of Venice."

And you may recognize Jiles' voice as Morris the Cat's mom for 9 Lives or as the whispering witch in the commercials for the Broadway musical, "Wicked."

Now that we've gotten a glimpse of her showbiz resumé and head shot, here are 10 things you probably didn't know about Jennifer Jiles — and check out her website, [www.jenniferjiles.com](http://www.jenniferjiles.com).

# JILES: Voiceover artist does recordings for the blind in her home studio

**1.** We know she can kick, but can she dance? Yes, indeed. "Ballet was my first love," she says. "All I wanted to do was be a ballerina." In fact, she now teaches ballet, right here in Croton. Two nights a week, she holds classes for adults in the social hall at the Asbury United Methodist Church. "I get to hang out with adults, try out material on them and make a little money, too," she says. On Saturdays, she teaches

a combined ballet class for parents with their children.

**2.** She works from home a lot — at night. She's got a home recording studio and is able to tape a lot of her voiceovers there without heading into the city. But hey, this is suburbia — with way too many noisy kids, lawnmowers and snow and leaf blowers during daylight hours.

**3.** She does volunteer work from home, too. In her studio, she does recordings for the blind, through New York City-based Gatewave ([www.gatewave.org](http://www.gatewave.org)), which offers recordings of more than 100 newspapers and magazines for the visually impaired. Once a week, Jiles reads "Entertainment Weekly" into her home microphone. The gig also keeps her up to date on showbiz, "and I get to figure out who has the best publicists."

**4.** She knew from about age 5 that she wanted to be an entertainer. "It was always 'Look at me! Look at me!,' " she remembers. "I'd be dancing around and my family had to pay total attention to me."

"I remember seeing "Funny Girl" and falling in love with Barbra Streisand, as Fanny Brice," she says. "Later, Carol Burnett was a great influence — and 'I Love Lucy.' I think I know every single show."

**5.** Her first car was a 1978 Oldsmobile that her dad snagged for \$375. "Every time you went down a hill, it would stall. So I would have to pull over, put it into Park and start it all over again." Thanks Dad! But it did get her to lots of tap and jazz dance classes in high school.

**6.** Before moving to Croton three years ago, she lived in New York City for 20 years in various apartments. In the early years, we're talking 300-square-foot walkups "with two cats and always a roommate."

**7.** All those tennis lessons her parents made her take, as a kid growing up in Poughkeepsie, paid off. That's her as a tennis player, in proper whites, in a Lever 2000 commercial.

**8.** She got to sing the National Anthem at Shea Stadium, the Mets' former home in Queens, in the mid-1990s, where she felt right at home. The SportsChannel kids' show, "DYNAMETS," was filmed there. Too bad her performance took place during a particularly lean time for the team. "The stadium held 56,000 people, and I think 54,000 of the seats were empty."

**9.** Her Croton haunts include the Tavern at Croton Landing ("probably my favorite place up here"), the Blue Pig for ice cream and the Black Cow for coffee.

**10.** And yup, she's still got those killer Rockette legs. "I probably always will," she admits. "My grandmother had great legs."